

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS
NLTAGS: PINT, PGOV, NATO, YO
SUBJECT: NATO POLADS DISCUSSION OF YUGOSLAV LEADERSHIP CHANGES

REF: A) USNATO 5004 B) BELGRADE 3798

1. IN VIEW OF REF A WE THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE HELPFUL TO BRING TOGETHER A NUMBER OF POINTS WHICH SHOULD BE USEFUL IN NATO DISCUSSIONS. VIEWING THE LEADERSHIP CHANGES IN GENERAL, IT APPEARS THAT THEY ARE NOT PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT PER SE AND REFLECT NO REAL CHANGES OF DIRECTION. OUR MAIN IMPRESSION IS ONE OF CONTINUITY BOTH IN REAL TERMS AND IN TERMS OF GOY'S INTEREST IN PROJECTING SUCH AN IMAGE.

2. WHILE A LOT OF SHIFTING HAS OCCURRED, MOST OF IT HAS BEEN LATERAL. THE CHANGES ARE FIRST AND FOREMOST OCCASIONED BY ROUTINE FACTORS: (A) THE CONCLUSION OF THE 1974-78 FOUR-YEAR TERM OF OFFICE FOR ALL SAVE THE FEDERAL PRESIDENCY AND TITO; (B) THE NATIONALITY BALANCE REQUIRED BY THE CONSTITUTION; (C) ORGANIZATIONAL TINKERING DESIGNED TO IMPROVE ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE.

3. MINIC'S DEPARTURE FROM THE FOREIGN SECRETARIAT POST IS VOLUNTARY. HE HAD REQUESTED TO BE RELIEVED OF HIS BURDENSOME
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DUTIES, ESPECIALLY TRAVEL, BECAUSE OF HIS HEALTH, BUT TITO UNTIL NOW REPORTEDLY HAD BEEN RELUCTANT TO LET HIM GO. MINIC WILL STILL HAVE CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS FROM HIS POSITION ON THE LCY PRESIDUM. WE DO NOT KNOW THE PRECISE REASON FOR THE SELECTION OF CROATIAN JOSIP VRHOVEC TO REPLACE MINIC BUT IN ANY CASE VRHOVEC'S PERSONAL VIEWS AND PREDILECTIONS (IF THEY DIVERGE AT ALL FROM THE PRESENT COURSE) WILL BE LITTLE

EVIDENT IN YUGOSLAV FOREIGN POLICY.

4. PERHAPS MORE INTERESTING ARE THOSE WHO STAYED: PRIME MINISTER VESELIN DJURANOVIC, WHO CAME TO OFFICE LAST YEAR ON THE DEATH OF DJEMAL BIJEDIC; DEFENSE SECRETARY NIKOLA LJUBICIC; AND INTERNAL AFFAIRS SECRETARY FRANJO HERLJEVIC. LJUBICIC SHOULD HAVE BEEN SUBJECT TO ROTATION (AFTER TWO TERMS MAXIMUM) AT THIS POINT BUT HIS RETENTION IS BEING JUSTIFIED ON THE BASIS THAT HE HAS HAD ONLY ONE TERM SINCE THE INTRODUCTION OF THE NEW CONSTITUTION AND DELEGATE SYSTEM IN 1974. (THERE IS LEGAL PROVISION FOR EXCEPTIONS TO THE ROTATION REQUIREMENT IN "EXCEPTIONAL CASES".) THUS,;FOR THE HEAD OF THE CABINET AND IN THE TWO POSTS MOST CRUCIAL TO THE COUNTRY'S INTERNAL STABILITY, THE YUGOSLAVS HAVE OPTED FOR THE SAFETY OF THE KNOWN QUANTITY.

5. OBVIOUSLY THE PARTY LEADERSHIP CHANGES WHICH WILL BE APPROVED AT THE LCY CONGRESS, JUNE 20-23, WILL BE MORE SIGNIFICANT. HOWEVER, WE EXPECT THAT THE SAME PATTERN OF MINIMAL CHANGE CONSISTENT WITH CONSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS WILL PREVAIL. THE PRINCIPLE OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS ARE THE NAMING OF A PRESIDUM SECRETARY (MOST PROBABLY STANCO DOLANC) AND THE DEGREE OF POWER INVESTED IN THE SECRETARY'S POSITION. THE REPUBLICAN AND PROVINCIAL CONGRESSES SO FAR HAVE BEEN PREOCCUPIED MAINLY WITH ECONOMIC QUESTIONS AND SECONDARILY WITH VARIOUS ADJUSTMENTS TO THE POLITICAL SYSTEM TO REALIZE MORE FULLY THE CONSTITUTIONAL

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"LEADING ROLE" OF THE PARTY. INDEED THE LONG PROMISED DEBATE ON "THE ROLE OF THE LCY" HAS FAILED TO MATERIALIZE.

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